

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Nailsworth Urban District Council.*

Stroud, Glos.,
31st January, 1910.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg herewith to present the 14th Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for your District, being the ninth since I first held that office.

Further progress was made during the year in improving the sanitary condition of the Town: the main sewerage is nearly completed and the mains of the Stroud Water Company were rendered available to the boundary of the District by the extension to Horsley

During 1909 the District experienced the most extensive outbreak of scarlet fever that has occurred since it became a separate Urban District: the disease was fortunately of a mild type and caused no death.


One of the most important public health Acts of recent years is the Housing and Town Planning Act 1909 which was passed at the end of the year, and should be useful in improving the housing of the working classes.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) **J. M. MARTIN,**

Medical Officer of Health.



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REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH 1909.

GENERAL.

The Nailsworth Civil Parish was created on the 6th October, 1892, out of the parts of Avening, Horsley and Minchinhampton Civil Parishes at the junction of the Avening, Horsley and Newmarket Valleys, and was made a separate Urban District by an Order of the Local Government Board on the 10th November, 1894. It consists of the market town of Nailsworth at the junction of the valleys with hamlets along the hill sides of these valleys. The population is just over 3,000 inhabitants, who are engaged in the various factories and workshops in and adjoining the district—leather board works, hosiery and stick works, bacon factory, corn mill, silk mills, &c.

The hill sides are very steep, and on them all the geological structures from the Greater Oolite down to the Upper Lias Clay are exposed.

HOUSING.

As mentioned in previous reports, the older houses generally are substantially built of stone, roofed with stone tiles, but modern houses of brick with slate roofs are gradually becoming the more common type. Several houses would be the better for minor repairs and the attention of owners and occupiers was called to 16 during 1909: 15 houses were cleansed on notice, 7 houses were placed in habitable repair, and 4 cases of overcrowding were abated.

The Bye-laws with respect to New Buildings were sealed on the 5th January, 1909, and plans for 11 new houses and additions to houses were approved by the Council during the year. At the end of the year (5th December) a special Plans Committee was appointed by the Council.

WATER SUPPLY.

The chief public source of water supply in the district is that of the Stroud Water Company, whose works are at Chalford in the Frome Valley, and reservoirs are on Minchinhampton Common, some 500 feet above the lowest part of this district. The resources of the Company have been recently augmented by the acquisition of a new source and the construction of large reservoirs on Minchinhampton Common and at Painswick, and it is anticipated that in future there should be no shortage of supply even in dry seasons. The most important extensions of the Company's mains of recent years are those to Newmarket in 1906 and to Walkley Wood in 1908, while in 1909 by the carrying of a main to Barton End in Horsley under private agreement, the water was made available for Bath Road and Harley Wood. During the seven years ending 1908, 115 houses were newly connected with the mains: the number in 1909 was 13, making the total so connected about 367, or 46.0 per cent. of total houses (occupied and unoccupied). Other sources of supply are wells and springs, which are numerous and provide abundant supplies in many parts of this neighbourhood.

MILK SUPPLY.

The milk sellers in this district are chiefly farmers and butchers, and are 6 in number: little milk is stored in the town, the greater part being distributed immediately after milking. One butcher had again to be reminded that the slaughter house was not a

proper place for the storage of milk vessels, but on the whole considerable care is given to the cleanliness of the churns and tins.

There is no systematic inspection of dairy cows by a veterinary surgeon, but in November, 1907, the Sanitary Inspector was empowered to secure the special examination of cows by a veterinary surgeon when there was reason to suspect tuberculosis, and the Council agreed to pay a fee of 10/6.

The regulations with respect to Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops which were adopted in 1908 were duly advertised on the 8th January, 1909, and came into force on the 23rd February, 1909.

OTHER PLACES FOR PREPARING FOODS—INCLUDING SLAUGHTER HOUSES AND BAKEHOUSES.

The nine slaughter houses (including the bacon factory) were visited on several occasions during the year: with the exception of one which was re-modelled in 1906 all are old established places and are not satisfactory in all respects, particularly in one case where the fasting lair is in the slaughter house. These places are visited at the time of slaughtering.

The bakehouses are four in number and are, on the whole, satisfactory: the floor in one might be renewed with advantage.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Steady progress was made during 1909 with the laying of the main sewers, and by the end of the year the greater part of them had been laid. The junction with the termination of the sewer of the Stroud Rural District Council had not, however, been made by the end of the year, but it is expected that this work will be done shortly and that connections of houses with the lowest part of the intercepting sewer will also be made within

the next few months. The contract for the extension of the disposal works at Ebley at a cost of £1,618 8s. 5d. was sealed by the Rural District Council on the 13th August, 1909.

As soon as the sewerage works are completed, arrangements will be made for the connection of the house drains, and while this work is in progress there will be opportunity for effecting considerable improvement in the form of closet in use which is in many cases that most objectionable type, the privy vault.

RIVERS POLLUTION.

The usual brooks scavenging committee was appointed at the June meeting of the Council.

HOUSE REFUSE.

House refuse in this district is collected by contract in accordance with the scheme given in my Annual Report for 1907. The tender of Mr. Govier at 14/- a week was accepted on the 2nd March, 1909, for one year. A disused stone quarry on the road up Nailsworth Hill is used as the "tip."

NUISANCES.

Mr. T. Nisbet, for 16 years Inspector under the London Gas, Light and Coke Company, and afterwards a plumber, was first appointed the Inspector of Nuisances in this district on the 7th March, 1905. During the four years he has held this office he has performed his duties well and satisfactorily to the Council. In December, 1908, Mr. C. J. Huddart, Assistant Inspector of the Local Government Board visited the district, and later the Local Government Board in a letter sanctioning the re-appointment of Mr. Nisbet until December, 1909, expressed the opinion that, in view of the necessary inspection of connections of houses with the new sewers, the Council should appoint a whole time officer as Inspector of Nuisances and Highway

Surveyor. In consideration, however, of the fact that the Clerk of Works, acting for the Council in connection with the sewerage will be in the service of the Council for some time longer, and that he can supervise any connections made during this time, it was felt that no change in existing arrangements was immediately necessary: accordingly the Council unanimously re-appointed Mr. Nisbet in December, and, in view of the above facts, expressed the hope that the Local Government Board would confirm the appointment for a year.

So far as practicable nuisances are promptly dealt with by Mr. Nisbet, but the keeping of swine in the town has caused considerable trouble: in two almost adjoining cases, action could be taken with respect to one under the bye-laws, but in the second the distance from a house exceeded the limit fixed in the bye-laws. On account of the undesirability of keeping swine in the central parts of the district and the difficulty experienced under the existing bye-laws, a modification was adopted by the Council at their meeting in December whereby the keeping of swine within the special area will be prohibited, except with the written consent of the Council.

BYE-LAWS AND ADOPTIVE LEGISLATION.

Bye-laws with respect to Nuisances, New Buildings and certain matters in connection with buildings, and Slaughter-houses were sealed by the Council on the 5th January, 1909, and allowed by the Local Government Board on the 11th March, 1909. Regulations with respect to Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops also came into force (as already mentioned) during the year.

After careful consideration the Council adopted Parts II., III., IV., VIII. and part of X. of the Public Health Acts Amendment

Act, 1907, on the 7th December, 1909, and have applied to the Local Government Board to declare them in force in this district.

SCHOOLS.

The inspection of the children attending the three Public Elementary Schools in this district is carried out directly under the County Education Committee: all three schools were inspected during the year and the attention of the Sanitary Authority was directed to the homes of 10 children who appeared to be neglected. Dirty conditions were found and notices were served by the Sanitary Inspector.

A full account of the sanitary condition of the schools was given in my report for 1907.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

The usual table with respect to Factories and Workshops required by the Home Office is appended to this Report and contains information as to the inspections made and notices served. During the year two communications were received from H.M. Inspector of Factories as to the sanitary conveniences in these places: a systematic inspection was made and it was found that several were unsatisfactory, but no action was taken as on the completion of the sewerage works considerable alterations will be made in most cases.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

During 1909 the Gig Mill was re-opened by a firm of fell-mongers: application for the sanction of the Council was not made until the 4th January, 1910, after their establishment, the occupiers stating that they did not know such approval was required. The Council gave their sanction, subject to a sample of the effluent being sent to them when required.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of cases of infectious diseases notified during 1909 was 46, which is the highest number in any year since 1890, with the exception of 1900, when an epidemic of diphtheria occurred, and a total of 79 notifications was recorded. The increase was due to an outbreak of scarlet fever of a mild type which occurred in September and the first half of October, during which period 35 cases were notified. It would appear that the infection was introduced into the district (in which no case of the disease had occurred since August 1908) during the summer holidays: the first case was that of a boy who had not returned to school after the holidays, and within the following week eight cases were notified, four of whom attended the Council School. The boys attending this school and many at their homes were examined on several occasions by Dr. Blake and myself, and various children presenting suspicious signs were excluded from school on suspicion, one finally being notified: the attendance at the schools became so greatly reduced that they were closed on the 16th September for a fortnight, the period being extended later until the 8th November. Cases, however, continued to arise after the closure of the schools, and in view of the fact that in all probability they were due to mild cases the seriousness of which was not recognised by the parents, a leaflet (appended) was distributed generally warning parents of the danger and stating that the District Council would pay for a medical certificate in the case of any child whom there was any reason to suspect. Advantage was taken of this concession by the parents of ten children, six of whom were found to have scarlet fever: with the detection of these the outbreak came to an end.

[Leaflet referred to on previous page.]

SCARLET FEVER.

“Several cases of Scarlet Fever have recently occurred in the neighbourhood of Nailsworth, and it would appear that the spread of the disease has been due to mild cases, the serious nature of which has escaped recognition by parents and guardians.

“The chief early symptoms of the disease are Headache, Sickness, Furred Tongue, and Sore Throat, followed within 24 hours by a Red Rash, particularly on the Chest. The illness may be very slight and one or more of the above symptoms may be absent.

“Parents and Guardians are strongly advised to regard any of the above symptoms with suspicion, and to consult their doctor without delay. Any Medical Fees for such consultation in the Urban District during the month of October will be paid by the Urban District Council.”

This is the first occasion, since compulsory notification was in force in this district, that more than eight cases of scarlet fever have occurred in any one year: it is fortunate that an Isolation Hospital was available as without this accommodation and the active measures that were taken for the control of suspicious children and the detection of mild cases, the outbreak might have been considerably more serious.

The total number of cases notified was 35 (occurring in 19 houses), all of whom, with one exception, were removed to the Isolation Hospital. No deaths occurred.

The summary of the action taken in connection with this outbreak may shortly be given as:—

1. The removal of all known cases to the Isolation Hospital.

2. The disinfection of all bedding in the Hospital steam disinfector, and of rooms by fumigation with sulphur.

3. The examination of children at school and at their homes.

4. Closure of all three schools.

5. The offer of free examination by medical men.

6. The examination of every child present at school on the re-opening of the schools on the 8th November.

The remaining cases—4 of diphtheria, 5 of erysipelas, 1 of typhoid fever and 1 of puerperal fever—call for no special comment.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The population of the district, estimated on the assumption that the rate of increase during the decennium 1891—1901 has continued, was 3,056 at the middle of 1909. The natural increase (excess of births over deaths) between 1901 and 1908 was 140, so that the estimated number of persons who migrated to other districts in the nine years is 112, or an average of 14 a year: the average annual number of migrations in the decennium 1891—1901 was about the same. The rates are calculated on the estimated population of 3,056.

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered during the year was 66—34 males and 32 females—a birth rate of 21.6 per 1,000. If the estimates of the population are correct, there has been a distinct rise in the birth rate in the past three years from 14.4 in 1907 to 21.6 in 1909, but the maximum was in 1903 (27.0), 2 of the 66 births were illegitimate. The percentage of illegitimate births in this district in the eight years (1902—1909)—4.8—is higher than the average for the whole Union, 3.9 per cent.

DEATHS.

During 1909, 38 deaths were registered in the district: 6 persons belonging to the district died in the Stroud Union Workhouse (4) and County Asylum (2). The total deaths are thus 44, a rate per 1,000 of 14.4, which is slightly above the average of the previous 10 years—14.2, but below the rate for the whole Union in 1909—15.0.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Six infants died under the age of one year (all legitimate), an infantile mortality of 91, which is lower than the corresponding rates in 1907 and 1908, but above the average for the previous 10 years—79.

UNCERTIFIED DEATHS.

All the deaths, except one, were certified by a medical practitioner. An inquest was held in this case, and a verdict was returned that the death was caused by heart failure accelerated by an accidental fall.

